

Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians by Oecumenius

also known as the Pseudo-Oecumenian Catena
on the Epistle to the Galatians

Translated by John Litteral



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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The commentary by Oecumenius on the Epistle to the Galatians was not written in the same manner as a common Bible commentary, written by one author, who interprets the Scripture passages, using his own thoughts and creativity throughout the body of work. But this commentary is a compilation of comments on each passage of Scripture that was gleaned from multiple Bible commentators and Early Church writers. This technique of taking excerpts from other writers and compiling them together to form a running commentary on Scripture was an exegetical style called *Catena*, which became a practice in Early Christianity for creating a study tool for clergy and students of the Scriptures.

As for the authorship of this *catena*, or to speak more precisely, the “compiler” of this *catena*, for centuries has been credited to Oecumenius, the Greek bishop of Tricca. For a long time it was believed that Oecumenius wrote his Bible commentaries around 990AD, but when his lost commentary on the book of Revelation, which Franz Diekamp rediscovered in 1901, and H. C. Hoskier published in 1928, the date of the Revelation manuscript pointed towards an earlier date, around the 6th century, making him a contemporary of Andrew of Caesarea. Andrew also wrote a commentary on the book of Revelation in the 6th century and somewhat in opposition to the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius. H.C. Hoskier, who published the first critical edition of the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius, understood Oecumenius to be the same author of the commentary on Revelation and all of the other NT commentaries, saying...

It is, therefore, not inappropriate to bring to public attention the text and commentary of OECUMENIUS, who flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries, and whose commentary on the Apocalypse has been missing for a long period, although some of his commentaries on other New Testament books have come down to us. Attributed generally to the tenth century, the document

which we now publish itself gives us the correct date (preceding Andrew [of Caesarea] 563-614 A.D. and Arethas 860-939 A.D.), and we can now place Oecumenius, Greek Bishop of Tricca, towards the beginning of the seventh century.¹

Naturally, this led some scholars to place the date of the other commentaries by Oecumenius to the 6th century. Many scholars today do not accept that the Oecumenius who wrote the commentary on Revelation to be the same author of the commentaries on Acts, Paul's Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles. For nearly a century now, there has been a renewed interest in Greek catenae, and effort has been taking place where scholars are in the works of producing critical texts of what they term the Pseudo-Oecumenian catena, which means that they believe that these commentaries have been falsely attributed to Oecumenius. I personally hold to the traditional view that the author of the commentary on Revelation to be the same author who wrote the other commentaries. But I do want to say that I am in no way dogmatic and I am completely open to the view held by modern scholars that the catena was perhaps falsely attributed to Oecumenius. I will explain my reasons below why I hold this position, and I will provide some excerpts from both points of view and then let you the reader come to their own conclusions.

In this catena on the Epistle to the Galatians there are excerpts from some of the Early Church Fathers that Oecumenius gleaned from. Not all excerpts have the names given from whom the sources are from. For those excerpts which have been named throughout this catena or partially quoted or referenced, John Chrysostom (died around 407A.D.), Eusebius Pamphili (died 339A.D.), Gennadius of Constantinople (died around 471A.D.), Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457A.D.), Cyril of Alexandria (died around 444A.D.), Severian of Gabala (355 – 425A.D.), Photius of Constantinople (810-891A.D.), and Oecumenius (6th century) himself have been specifically quoted and labelled as excerpts.

There are undoubtedly more excerpts that are not identified, but I limited the amount of time that I spent to locate all the sources, though I truly wish that I had the time to identify as many of the excerpts as I could. Oecumenius relied heavily upon the commentary on Galatians by John Chrysostom throughout the entire catena on Galatians, but his name is only given a few times as a source. Oecumenius took the interpretations from Chrysostom as the primary source but repackaged it, oftentimes in a more concise manner. Oecumenius did that same technique with some other sources as well, which makes it a bit challenging to locate the sources from where the original thoughts came from. The excerpts from Photius of Constantinople were a later stage of manuscript development and are found throughout the catena on Galatians, but those excerpts were added later by copyists, oftentimes as outer marginal notes, but then were later grafted into the main text by later editors. Photius was the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 858 to 867 and from 877 to 886, which means that he came much later than Oecumenius of the 6th century.

My Translation

This translation of the catena on the Epistle to the Galatians was translated from volume 118 of the *Patrologia Graeca* printed edition of 1864. I have recently translated the commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, Revelation, Acts, Hebrews, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon by Oecumenius, and they are published and available in print and electronic versions².

I also used the Pauline commentaries from the Greek Church, Collected and edited from catena manuscripts, by Dr. Karl Staab³, published in 1933. This edition was very helpful for me to locate many excerpts from the text that were not identified, nor given any indication of where the excerpts began or ended.

Oecumenius vs Pseudo-Oecumenius

As mentioned above, I am not dogmatic about whether the original compiler of the catena on Paul's Epistles, Acts, and the Catholic Epistles is the same author of the 6th century commentary on Revelation, but I do favor that it is the same Oecumenius who authored both. As an author of over twenty published books, I can relate to writing in two different styles, one as a complier, and also as an author based upon my own thoughts and creativity. I have also seen different styles of writings among many authors of the Early Church. I have not only seen different styles of writings from a single author, but I have also seen different manuscripts of the same writing from the same author have significant differences between them. That is one reason why textual critics are motivated to develop critical texts based upon the best manuscripts that are available in order to have a reliable standardized text. I have encountered this "dilemma" in my own translation projects in the past, especially with the English translation of the Glossa Ordinaria on the book of Revelation and the Questions on the Old and New Testaments by Ambrosiaster. As the editor of the translation of the Glossa Ordinaria on the book of Revelation, I chose to use a 12th century Gloss manuscript as well as a 13th century manuscript, and then a 15th century version of the Gloss. Instead of trying to create a critical text, I decided to adopt glosses that I knew were not from the original glossator because they added value to the commentary as an exegetical tool for the readers. I had the same motivation when I translated the Questions on the Old and New Testaments by Ambrosiaster. There were two versions of the work by Ambrosiaster, one was a shorter version and another a longer version. I translated both for the same reason, and that is for the value of the commentary. And for this translation of the Catena on the Epistle to the Galatians by Oecumenius, there are excerpts that I know that are not original to the author but the content has been carefully modified over time.

The Photius excerpts are an obvious addition by editors and copyists, but they add value to the commentary as a tool for exegetical purposes.

For those who reject the Oecumenian authorship, they provide legitimate arguments, but I am still not convinced even after examining all the arguments. The primary argument is that the name “Oecumenius” has been prefixed to some of the excerpts, as if an anonymous author or a later copyist added excerpts from an Oecumenius scholia. Since the catena has excerpts from Oecumenius, then the original author would not be Oecumenius. This is the argument that Karl Staab makes...

One only needs to examine the commentaries of Paul of more recent and newest times and one will repeatedly find Oecumenius cited as a key witness of Greek Pauline exegesis. But research based on the earliest manuscript sources increasingly destroys his fame. In the introductory volume I believe I have provided the definitive proof that this great compilation of all the Pauline epistles does not belong to our Oecumenius, that it contains only a number of scholia from his hand.³

That does make logical sense, but I find the argument in the introductory material of the *Patrologia Graeca* to be quite satisfying to me, saying...

Moreover, although in the earlier books no one has prefixed his name, as is the custom among the Greeks, never publishing under his own name what he has not elaborated by his own effort, but rather collecting certain patches from various sources: yet from evident conjectures we gather that Oecumenius is partly the author of these, partly the collector who, however, sometimes, when he presents his opinion after others, has also added his own name, lest anyone attribute it to others, which he himself did not consider worthy to be compared with their opinions.⁴

I can totally relate to that myself. Years ago I was creating a catena, that I called *The Aquinas Study Bible*, for my website⁵ where I would provide the Scripture text followed by excerpts from the

Church Fathers as well as some of the Scholastic theologians, and there were some places where I would add my own comments and I would prefix my own name to the excerpt so that people knew what was coming from me, and not by Patristic writers who I considered far superior to myself.

The commentaries by Oecumenius on Acts, Paul's Epistles, and the Catholic Epistles gained a lot of favor throughout the centuries and were consulted by many great theologians throughout the centuries, but his commentary on the book of Revelation, even though his was the very first Greek commentary on Revelation, did not have the same fame because the church of the East were very slow to accept Revelation as canonical, and it was overshadowed by the commentary on Revelation by Andrew of Caesarea, and it was considered lost until it was rediscovered in 1901. As for me, I place great value upon all of his commentaries because he does an excellent job providing clear and well balanced interpretations of the Scriptures, which has been my main motivation for taking on the work of translating his commentaries into English so that more people can read and benefit from his commentaries on Scripture the way I have over the years. Lord willing, I will continue this labor of love by translating as many of his Bible commentaries as I can.

Translator notes for the introduction

1. The complete commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse : now printed for the first time from manuscripts at Messina, Rome, Salonika, and Athos, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan, Hoskier, H. C. (Herman Charles), 1864-1938, editor. Page 4
2. The electronic versions are on Kindle from Amazon, and Archive.org.
3. Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche. Aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben. Von Dr. Karl Staab. 1933.

4. Patrologia Graeca (Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca)
118. Oecumenius v.1: Commentary on Acts, Commentary on Paul's letters, Commentary on the Catholic letters. Pages 16-17

5. The website was called Patristic Bible Commentary, which was a Google site, that was deleted by Google a few years ago. Sadly that website is no longer available but there is a lot of the commentary preserved by Catena Bible, who has a website and <https://catenabible.com/mt/1> and an app.

Commentary on Galatians by Oecumenius

HYPOTHESIS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

Paul sends this letter from Rome, having already seen and taught them. The occasion of the Epistle is this: Being taught well by the Apostle, the Galatians, and having truly believed in Christ, after the Apostle's departure were carried off by some, so as to be circumcised. When the Apostle learned these things, he writes to them. And first, he bears witness to them concerning the faith they had and the sincere disposition in Christ. He criticizes them, however, as having acted foolishly and as having been turned aside. Then he discusses the law and the faith according to Abraham. And he demonstrates from both the law and Abraham's women, allegorizing them, that they were given the shadow and the circumcision for a time, and that they should cease from this time at the coming of Christ. And having therefore demonstrated it, he then commands them no longer to pay attention to those who deceive, but rather stay strong to the faith in Christ, and to know that the grace in Christ nullifies the fleshly circumcision. And therefore again concerning conduct, by warning and teaching, he concludes the epistle.

THEODORET

The preface and almost the entire Epistle are full of anger. The cause, however, was this: Certain men who had believed from the Jews and still clung to the paternal law persuaded many faithful among the Galatians to be circumcised and to observe the Sabbaths and New Moons. They were persuading, saying that one ought not to obey Paul, who had appeared a few days earlier, but

rather Peter, James and John. For they said that since those three had been with Christ they did not forbid circumcision. And indeed they, making use of a certain privilege and condescension toward the Jews, did not forbid circumcision. But these men, for a hidden reason, namely that by conceding they might not forbid it, by that very fact ensnared them into circumcision, and rendered Paul rejected, saying that he was not a disciple of Christ but of the apostles, whereas Peter and the others were of Christ. They then said that Paul elsewhere was shown to have circumcised; "why then," they asked, "did he not circumcise you?" For indeed Paul had circumcised Timothy by a certain concession. (Acts 16:1-3) Therefore he writes on these matters, and at once in the opening he is directed to the fact that the disciple was not of man, but of Christ himself.

THE APOSTLE PAUL, EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

CHAPTER 1

Galatians 1:1-5 *Paul the Apostle, not from men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead, and all the brothers with me, to the Churches of Galatia: grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Immediately the being of a disciple of men is destroyed. For he says, "I am an apostle, not having been commissioned by men, nor through a man, but through Christ himself I came to this work."

"*but through Jesus Christ and God the Father.*" Notice here the preposition διὰ, that is, *through*, is applied to *the Father* and the Son, and the Son is named first.

"*who raised him.*" This has been said concerning the honor given to the Father, and because of the weakness of those who hear.

"*from the dead.*" At the opportune time he remembered the Lord's economy [οἰκονομίας] and death, so that, having reminded of the benefits of Christ, he might in that way persuade them no longer to cling to the law but to Christ.

"*and all the brothers with me.*" For what reason does he now mention all the brothers together? Because those who were accusing him said that Paul alone was now forbidding circumcision; therefore he wishes to show that there are many allies to him in such a teaching.

"*to the Churches of Galatia.*" See the mark of anger. For he did not say, as was customary, "to the Beloved," or "to the Sanctified," or at least "to the Churches of God," but "*of Galatia.*"

— [CHRYSOSTOM] "*grace to you.*" For since they were in danger of falling from grace because of the circumcision, he prays this for them.

He also says, "*and peace.*" For they had been at war with God, by the observance of the ritual precepts.

"*from God the Father.*" Where do you have, he says, the right to call God Father?" Is it not from baptism? Why then do you oppose the law?

"*who gave himself.*" Behold, he gave himself; therefore, when you hear that he has been given by the Father, perceive the Father's good pleasure.

“to deliver us from.” He gave Himself for our sins, blotting out the former things and preserving for the future.

He says, *“to deliver us from the present evil age,”* that is, from evil actions and a corrupted life: for he calls this an *evil age*, not the time itself or the day: Not at all. For we also are accustomed to speak accordingly when something unexpected has happened to us: *“I endured an evil day.” “of the evil age.”* By saying *“the present evil age,”* he showed that evil is not uncreated, nor eternal, but temporary.

"according to the will of God and our Father." For since they said that one ought not to abandon the law which had been given by God, he likewise showed that it was the Father's will that they should believe in Christ. For according to the will of the Father the Christ gave himself. You see that there is nowhere a command of the Father to the Son, but only harmony. Again, having said *"our Father,"* he reminds us of baptism. What then do you have of the law?

"to whom be the glory forever and ever." Reflecting on the indescribable benefits of God through the things said, he finished his speech in doxology. For he could not express them.

Galatians 1:6-8 *I am astonished that you are so quickly turning away from the one who called you by the grace of God to a different gospel. Not that there is another gospel, except that there are some who are disturbing you and wanting to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we preached to you, let him be accursed.*

Two sins: transferring blame, and doing so quickly, as if deceivers needed no time. Observe carefully. Since they thought to appease the Father by holding to the law, he showed that one who departs

from Christ and the Gospel also departs from the Father. For the Father himself, he says, has called us to the grace of his Son. For the Son bestows remission by his blood, by grace and not by merit, for the Father calls to this; truly the Spirit consents. Indeed, it is a common benefit toward us of the holy and blessed Trinity.

"to a different gospel." For they called their deception a "gospel", persuading the Galatians to observe things like Sabbaths and circumcision, using the name as bait.

"Not that there is another gospel." Which is to say, he declares, only one thing, and there is no other besides this. Unless, then, some of you are troubled, wishing to pervert you and to distort the gospel of Christ.

"But even if we or." So that no one may say that he composes his own preaching out of vainglory, he first accurses himself, if indeed he were willing to alter anything in the Gospel.

"an angel from heaven." Do not say to me, he says, Peter and John and James, but even if the powers above were to pervert the Gospel, let them be accursed. And these things, he says, not as if something different from what others proclaim about Peter (for neither are the powers above) but wishing to stop the mouths of the deceivers who, by means of the office surrounding Peter, were deceiving them.

"contrary to what we preached." The phrase "to what" indicates the extent, however small, of the preaching.

Galatians 1:9-10 *As we have said before, and I say again now. If anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let them be accursed. "For am I now persuading people, or God? Or am I seeking to please*

people? For if I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

So that they may not think I have said these things out of anger, as if not truly believing them, he adds the verb second, "*For am I now persuading,*" as if this has been judged and established with him. "*am I now persuading people, or God?*" Then, that they may not suppose that he wishes to persuade them and proclaim different things to others (for those who deceive him accused him, that to some he proclaims circumcision, to others something else) and that they might fall away as if being flattered, he says: "*Or am I seeking to please people?*" I do not say these things to flatter and please you, he says. For if I were seeking to please people, I would also be opposing the Judaism, and friends and kinsmen, and would not have run to Christ abandoning all.

Narrative of his own transition from Judaism by revelation.

Galatians 1:11-14 *I want you to know, brothers, the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but through a revelation of Christ. For you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

Paul wishes to show them that he did not receive the preaching from men, but from Christ himself. "*is not according to men.*" For it is according to God, that is, according to a revelation from God.

He says, "*For I neither received it from man.*" For this is what his slanderers were saying about him: that Paul received the preaching

from men, not, as those supporting Peter claimed, from Christ. Therefore they said: He ought not to be trusted.

"For you have heard." Then since the Galatians did not know of the revelation which had been given to Paul by Christ, he wishes, in order to show that he was formerly a persecutor and now suddenly transformed, which, unless some divine vision had been granted to him, he would by no means have been so suddenly transformed; so that, having been convinced by this, they would not despise him as a disciple of Christ.

"my former way of life." They would not, however, have heard from Palestine to Galatia, unless he was a very great persecutor.

— [SEVERIAN] *"in Judaism."* What need is there for conduct within Judaism? But let him show one thing, that it works not by deception but by truth. For not having rejected the law did he flee from grace (for he vindicated it), having found that which was more perfect, he departed from the law. [*end of the excerpt by Severian*] —

"tried to destroy it." I was not only pursuing it, he says, but also resolved to overthrow and annihilate it. For this is the meaning of, *"tried to destroy it."*

"And I advanced." I advanced in the persecution of the churches, that is, I continually strove to make it more severe. I advanced and was honorable on that account among the Jews. What then is the reason that they suddenly took up arms against me, those who honored and loved me? Nothing else, he says, but the revelation of Christ.

"being more exceedingly zealous." I advanced, since I had once been exceedingly zealous for my ancestral traditions. Therefore, he says, I never did the things I did from boastfulness, but from zeal for God, even though mistaken. If then I did not even then act from boastfulness, how could I now, after coming to the

knowledge of the truth, preach falsehood to please men rather than those things I received from Christ?

Galatians 1:15-16 *When he who separated me from my mother's womb and, having called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately accord with flesh and blood.*

If from his *mother's womb* he was restricted against preaching and was restrained, for some entirely divine privilege the intervening time was allowed, so that his sudden change might strengthen many.

"and, having called me by his grace." He was indeed called as a vessel of election; yet he says that he was called by grace, as if to say: the Lord has called me by grace, though I am unworthy and unsuitable.

"reveal his Son." The Father, he says, called me to the revealing of his Son.

He said, *"in me,"* wishing to show that he had learned not only by word but also by mind and heart, as into the inner person in whom knowledge has taken up residence.

"that I might preach him." Do you see that the Father who called and revealed his Son to him himself ordained Paul to be a preacher and apostle?

— [PHOTIUS] How then, he says, did I receive and learn the preaching from men? Immediately I did not turn aside to ease and luxury, nor, thinking myself to have achieved something great, fall into slackness and neglect, but I made the course of the Gospel demanding.

Therefore, it was. I no longer valued seeing relatives, or a house, or acquaintances, or homeland, but leaving all behind (for in these matters I am not inferior to those concerning Peter and John), I immediately ran into Arabia and to Damascus and to the preaching.

"I did not immediately accord with flesh and blood." Paul says that he did not go into discussions with the apostles about the preaching, being satisfied with the divine revelation. But he says this to show that he had not learned preaching from the disciples, but from Christ himself. For those who slandered him were saying that he was a disciple of men, not of Christ.

Galatians 1:17-19 *I did not go up to Jerusalem to those apostles who were before me, but I went into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and I stayed with him fifteen days. I did not see any other of the apostles, except James the brother of the Lord.*

Paul said this more clearly, showing that he was not taught by the apostles but by Christ himself. He did not, he says, go up to Jerusalem to see the *apostles before me* and to learn anything from them. For he did go *up to Jerusalem* from *Damascus*, as the Acts indicate, (Acts 9:2) but not to be instructed, rather to preach Christ himself and to teach the faith. For just as he says he went into *Arabia* preaching and then again into *Damascus*, so likewise to Jerusalem. [end of the Photius excerpt] —

After three years, however, from the beginning of my preaching and teaching I returned to see Peter, *I went up to see Peter*, not to learn anything from him. For I was then preaching and proclaiming the gospel.

"but I went into Arabia." When it was recounted concerning the towns to which he had gone, the remarkable deeds that had been

done there by him fell silent, because they were of great modesty of spirit.

"*to visit Peter.*" See the humility. After so many and such great struggles he withdrew so that he might seem to be inferior to Peter. But so that he might remain honored as well, it was done on account of the honor which he conferred upon Peter.

He said, "*I stayed with him,*" yet I was not taught."

"*I did not see any other of the apostles.*" How could one who had not seen anyone have learned from them?

"*the brother of the Lord.*" James was not the brother of the Lord, but he was thought to be¹, yet in order to lift him up he calls him the brother of the Lord.

Galatians 1:20-24 But I write to you, behold before God, that I do not lie. Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. Only they were hearing, "He who once persecuted us now proclaims the faith which he once destroyed," and they glorified God in me.

"I tell you before the Lord that I am not lying." Do you see how he strives with this statement? For he even risked not being credible with regard to the proclamation, as being a follower of men and not of Christ.

"*into the regions of Syria.*" After seeing Peter, the way to the Gentiles was again kept. He says toward *the regions of Syria and Cilicia*; for he had been sent to those places.

"*I was unknown.*" Therefore, he says, I did not preach to those who had believed from the circumcision that they must be circumcised (for this is what the slanderers said, that he proclaimed

circumcision to those who believed from the Jews); therefore I did not preach, he said, since they did not know from the beginning.

Or therefore. — [PHOTIUS] From Peter I did not learn; I only saw him. From James I did not learn; for I only saw him as well. I did not see any other of the apostles. But not from some other humbler and not so prominent person? And how does it stand that I learned this from those who have not even seen my face? For I was unknown in appearance to the churches in Judea. For the others were in need of instruction, but they did not teach. Therefore, I did not learn it from a man. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

“*to the Churches of Judea.*” To the Churches around Syria and Cilicia, to those of the Jews who have turned back to the Lord. For this is what “*in Christ*” signifies.

— [PHOTIUS] “*and they glorified God in me.*” He did not say, “They praised me,” or “They glorified me,” but, “*they glorified God,*” he says. For all that which was in me, he says, was of God’s grace.

“*in me,*” that is, on account of me.

“*glorified God in me,*” not this or that teacher, but God himself. He was the one who revealed to me and taught the preaching. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

Translator notes for Galatians chapter 1.

1. Oecumenius appears to have drawn primarily from Chrysostom concerning James not being the actual brother of Jesus. Theodoret of Cyrus goes even further saying, “He was called a brother of the Lord, but was not so by nature. For he was not, as some suppose, a son of Joseph, born from a previous marriage; rather he was the son of Clopas and a cousin of the Lord, for his mother was the sister of the mother of the Lord.”

CHAPTER 2

On the apostles' testimony concerning life in faith.

Galatians 2:1-3 *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. I went up by revelation, and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles; but privately to those who seemed to be influential, in case I might be running or had run in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me and a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.*

Regarding the first, Peter stated the cause; regarding the second, the revelation.

"*with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.*" These Paul was bringing as witnesses of his own preaching.

"*I went up by revelation.*" And why, for that reason, did he not entrust them at the outset, but only after so many years? Since many, seeing those around Peter permitting circumcision while Paul did not permit it, were scandalized as though there were disagreement in the preaching, the Holy Spirit revealed to him his ascent to Jerusalem, so that those who were being scandalized might be persuaded that there was no disagreement in the preaching, but rather a dispensation in favor of permitting circumcision.

"*and I laid before them the gospel.*" This is, I have shared, I have taken counsel with them.

"*which I preach.*" Apart from circumcision.

"*but privately.*" Since those of the Jews who had believed in Jerusalem were being offended if anyone forbade circumcision, and Paul's preaching removed it, so that it might keep them from being scandalized, he entrusted the preaching to them privately.

— [PHOTIUS] Why privately? So that, without drawing attention first of all, I might not scandalize those newly converted by circumcision, and therefore absolutely prepare them to fall away from the faith of Christ, and destroy my course, and show my struggle and my zeal to have been in vain. For how is it not vain to run and have run, when, running to save, I again destroy others through thoughtless exactness? How then now, and publicly I am convicted; that it was progress, and that even certain principles dared to shape the administration. Or the "for fear that" may also be said as a question, as a confirmation of the fact that I do not run or have run in vain, but that I acted in all things with safety and foresight. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"To those who seemed." The phrase, "to those who seemed," does not deny the existence of the leading men around Peter, but rather, as one might say, to those who are something, to those who are foremost.

"in case I might be running or had run in vain." For not that I might learn, "in case I might be running or had run in vain," or that I ran (for I knew from the revelation of Christ the exactness of the preaching); but that those who cause rebellion, implying the men around Peter, might learn that I do not run or have run in vain.

"Yet not even Titus, who was with me and a Greek." He says *"who was with me"* and *"a Greek,"* that is, uncircumcised. Therefore, being uncircumcised, he was not compelled by the apostles to be circumcised, which would have been a criticism, nor did they preach circumcision to the men around Peter; yet, out of accommodation to the believing Jews from Israel, they consented to circumcision.

In another way. — [PHOTIUS] *Not even Titus,* he says, although evidently born of a *Greek* lineage, did the apostles compel to be circumcised, although seeing also the false brothers present. For the *"Yet not even"* must be understood from the preceding section,

as in “*Yet not even Titus was compelled.*” He says, “*to be circumcised.*” Not on account of the unpleasant false brothers. What then? Because we circumcised Timothy, will he make that a reason against the false brothers? We did not circumcise him on their account, God forbid! But in order that he might win those who were being scandalized by reason of weakness. For towards the weak one must yield in order to the gentle treatment of the difficulty; but towards those moved by hatred and wicked purpose, not even the least compromise. For these, not only do they not need a cure, having fastened upon them every remedy of the passion, but they seek to fill their neighbors with their own disease. Therefore, “toward whom we did not even for an hour,” (Gal. 2:5) as the divine Paul declares. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

Galatians 2:4-5 *Because of the false brothers who had secretly come in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us, toward whom we did not even for an hour yield in submission, so that the truth of the Gospel might remain with you.*

Not because there were false brothers present, that is, pretend Christians, did the apostles compel Titus to be circumcised, which would have been a sign that Peter and his followers did not approve of circumcision. But there were certain false brothers in the appearance of brothers or Christians, preaching circumcision: not like Peter with the others out of accommodation and a certain allowance, but defending the matter as though it were a law. And the apostles tolerated this only with the Jews; those men even imposed circumcision among the Gentiles. For these were the Galatians who were causing disturbance. Nor, therefore, when they were present, he says, those whose work it was to preach circumcision, was Titus compelled to be circumcised.

"*who had secretly come in.*" He says the false brethren slipped in secretly, seeking to spy upon our freedom in Christ, that they might again subject us to the yoke of the law and to Judaic observances. For by not submitting to them he calls it freedom. See also how he showed them to be enemies, and entered as spoilers of the faith, first by saying, "who had secretly come in," indicating their secret and dangerous entrance, and by saying, "*to spy.*" For he who spies does so with harm and deceit in mind.

And, "*in order to enslave us,*" he says. For indeed Peter and the other apostles allowed circumcision in order gradually to avoid the bondage of the law, whereas these imposed it so as to drive others into bondage.

"*toward whom we did not even for an hour yield in submission.*" Therefore, he says, we did not yield to them in submission, so that the truth of the Gospel preached by me to you might remain unshaken and firm. But what is its truth? "The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new in Christ." (2 Cor. 5:17) And that for those who are circumcised, Christ will profit nothing.

"*in submission.*" He did not say, "To teaching," but "in submission," indicating that they seriously sought to submit themselves and to be again enslaved to the law.

Galatians 2:6-8 But as for those who seemed to be something, whoever they were, it makes no difference to me. God shows no partiality toward a person. For those who seemed to be esteemed added nothing to me; on the contrary, knowing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision just as Peter had been with the Gospel of the circumcision. For the one who worked

through Peter to apostleship of the circumcision also worked through me to the Gentiles.

If Paul explicitly said that they tolerated circumcision for reasons of convenience, the believing Jews who rejoiced in circumcision would have departed from them, because they did not accept circumcision in truth, but out of convenience and arrogance. Therefore Paul does not now reveal the usefulness. Otherwise he manages the argument so as to counter those about Peter, saying, “they will give an account of what they preach to God”; (Rom. 14:12) and this is because of their weakness.

— [PHOTIUS] “*who seemed to be.*” From those who seem to be great, those around Peter, whatever they once were, whether pleasing God or not, because of accepting circumcision, I, he says, do not differ. For I know that each will give account to God, and not even God will make them ashamed because they are leaders.

“*God shows no partiality to a person.*” This, however, has been said, has been defined above. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

“*whoever they were.*” He also indicates they already having ceased to admit circumcision for reasons of stewardship¹ [οἰκονομικῶς]. For he did not say, “What sort some of them are,” but, “whoever they were.” But in this respect, he says, what they do is no different from theirs, for having once heard my preaching they neither added to it nor took anything away; and they seem to be such as those around Peter, whom Paul mentions as great and notable.

“*on the contrary.*” Not only, he says, did they not correct anything concerning my preaching, but on the contrary, they praised it. And this arrangement is as follows: “*on the contrary, knowing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision,*” the rendering with much, they say, “They gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.” (Galatians 2:9) This, then, is to correct

the opposite, namely to take the right hand, which was a sign of receiving their proclamation.

“the Gospel of the uncircumcision.” As in the case of the uncircumcised nations. See how Paul equates himself to Peter. For this one indeed needed favor, so that he might appear credible to the Galatians.

— [PHOTIUS] *“just as Peter.”* If Paul said that those around Peter practice circumcision for reasons of convenience, he would seem even to allow this himself, and therefore by cooperating all the more he would have been shown to be for those with whom he had a quarrel. He says, For if Peter does well by permitting it, why should you not as well? And why do you bitterly reproach what you call stewardship? Let it act and do not rebuke, and call it whatever is dear to you, whether stewardship, or doctrine and exactness. These things they might also have considered and said to Paul, if he spoke according to economy when he accepted those about Peter undergoing circumcision. For a soul alarmed about something, taking hold of a small and accidental pretext, grows more attached to it and is entangled with it. Therefore Paul very wisely altogether keeps silence about the matter of economy, but sharply attacks the action, and as if censuring those who had conceded it he rebukes them, so that by the severity of his warning concerning that matter he might dismay and correct those who truly were transgressing. Therefore he does not cease to call them, even though they seem guilty, hypocritical, and not rightly walking, so that only the preaching of Christ may be confirmed. Therefore they encouraged one another for the sake of the preaching, and were bound by such a bond that, if it should happen, by each accusing the other the preaching of the word might be strengthened. And so that you may learn this precisely, observe: Paul, through his letters, reproves Peter; and Peter, through his letter, praises Paul, and bears witness that the letters are full of the wisdom and grace of God, and that the unlearned do not

understand the hidden mind in them, but rather pervert it and cry out. Moreover, Paul, speaking these things about Peter for the sake of the preaching, far more clearly surpasses and honors him. For what is it but an insult, to seem and not to stand firm, to be under the denunciation of Christ? [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"of the circumcision," that is, of the Jews.

Galatians 2:9-10 *And recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were thought to be pillars, gave to Barnabas and me the right hands of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised, only that we should remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do.*

"And recognizing the grace." He presents as witnesses to Peter those about whom the grace was given to him.

"who were thought to be pillars." They are, Paul says, pillars of the faith, esteemed by all.

"They gave the right hand." Because the doctrines are common, and because they made us sharers with themselves in the declaration. For this reason they also *gave the right hand*, indicating that they approve of our preaching, he says, because it is the same as theirs.

"that we should go to the Gentiles." That we might go to the Gentiles, he says, while they preach among the Jews.

"only that we should remember the poor." The preaching, he says, passing round, we hold the poor in common. These, however, were those seized from among their own tribesmen who did not believe, because of their faith in Christ.

On the objection to Peter, concerning salvation by faith and not by the law.

Galatians 2:11-13 *When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself, fearing those of the circumcision; and the other Jews joined him in his pretense. So even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.*

There was no dispute or condemnation in Paul's opposing Peter, but a matter of far-sightedness. For since, through accommodation, those around Peter in Jerusalem tolerated circumcision, wishing gradually to lead the Gentile converts from the Jews to completion, when Peter came to Antioch, while none of the Jews there were yet believers, he used to eat without distinction with those who believed from the Gentiles; but when they arrived, so as not to scandalize them, being still weak, he withdrew and ceased to eat with them. The cause of this, as has been said, was the weakness of those people. And that Paul acted openly, but not to oppose Peter privately, was a matter of far-sightedness, so that when the believers from Judea saw their teacher Peter accused openly, they might perceive whatever was not in accord with the uncircumcised and not combative, and know that the observance of the law after faith was no longer necessary but was merely a ploy to entrap Peter. That this was managed therefore, Paul plainly entered into argument with Peter, so that the believers from the circumcision, hearing, would turn from the observance of the law; for if the anger were genuine, he ought to have argued with them privately.

In another way. — [OECUMENIUS] Eusebius Pamphili, in the Ecclesiastical History² shows that the Cephas mentioned is not Peter, but a namesake of his, one of the seventy. And the argument is reasonable. For Peter would not again have needed to retreat,

who had already defended this matter in Jerusalem and, having persuaded everyone when he ate with Cornelius, had caused some of those of the circumcision to be scandalized, and had also said, "Truly, brothers, I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation the one who fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34-35) For he was not the one who said these things. But if he had acted therefore contrary to the beginning of his preaching, and had convinced everyone that he had not acted wrongly, the Spirit leading him to this, how would he now, after such a long time, after giving Peter the proof of his own virtue, have again needed such a kind of management? And as for the fact that he was judged, you may also think in this way: "It has happened to me," he says, as a pretext for opposing him face to face and refuting him, nothing else, or that he had been previously judged by the Jews concerning eating with those uncircumcised when he ate with Cornelius. For if he had not been beforehand judged there by those who were scandalized, he would not now have been admonished. And if he had not been admonished, there would have been no need either of a rebuke or of the face-to-face opposition. But what profit is the face-to-face opposition at all?

— [OF THE SAME] Because he made it timely to be spoken before the Jews, that "We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from the Gentiles," (Gal. 2:15) knowing that no one is justified by works of the law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ, and we also believed in Jesus Christ in order that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by works of the law, because these things were said before all, there arose a personal opposition. For if indeed there was any fault, he ought to have reproved and corrected it privately, the Lord saying: "If your brother sins, rebuke him privately." (Matt. 18:15) If he refuses, then bring others and the church. [*end of the excerpt by Oecumenius*] —

"*he was clearly in the wrong.*" Peter was in the wrong, not by the truth nor by Paul who knew the allowance, away with that! but by those ignorant of the administration and thinking he was acting hypocritically because of the matter: that when the believing Jews were absent he used to eat with the Gentiles, but when they were present he no longer did so. And you know what has been written concerning Cephas.

"*from James.*" James, who is called the brother of Christ, served as bishop of Jerusalem. From him therefore those sent forth came who had believed from among the Jews, still observing the law.

"*he began to draw back and separate himself.*" From the association with the Gentiles, of course.

And the phrase "*fearing those*" does not mean that he feared they might do him harm, but that he feared so as not to, having been scandalized, they might fall away from the faith.

"*joined him in his pretense*"³ [συνυπεκρίθησαν]. He calls the thing itself a pretense, so that the hidden arrangement would no longer benefit those who believed because of circumcision.

"*and the other Jews.*" For there were also other believers from the circumcision in Antioch, who themselves, he says, separated themselves from those of uncircumcision because of those who had come from James.

Galatians 2:14-17 *But when I saw that they were not walking straight according to the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter before them all: "If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature and not sinners from the Gentiles, knowing that a person is not justified by works of the law but by faith in Jesus*

Christ. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law. For by works of the law no flesh shall be justified. If, seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, then is Christ a minister of sin? Far be it!"

In what sense has it been said, "joined him in his pretense," (Gal. 2:13) likewise also, "*not walking straight*," it was said. For he does not wish to reveal the arrangement.

"*according to the truth of the Gospel.*" For the truth of the Gospel is not to circumcise nor to withdraw from those faithful from uncircumcision. "For there is neither Jew nor Greek." (Gal. 3:28)

"*I said to Peter before them all.*" You see that for this reason he scolded Peter before all, not to condemn Peter, but so that he might benefit those of the circumcision, as has been said before.

"*If you, being a Jew.*" But he did not say it openly to the followers of James; "Imitate your teacher living as a Gentile," that is, quietly. For this is constructed from the speech addressed to Peter.

"*why do you compel the Gentiles?*" Which, he says, you do not do, nor compel others to do. But why did he not say: Why do you compel those who are of the circumcision to Judaize? since he was speaking because of them, and the sequence of the discourse was such that it could have been said so. Yet he spoke in this way so that he might seem to care for his own disciples, namely those who were of the Gentiles, for fear that the arrangement for which the rebuke existed be revealed.

"*We who are Jews by nature.*" Instead of "from above and from ancestors."

"*knowing that a person is not justified.*" Having fulfilled what accords with Peter's opposition, he now turns to the subject at hand, slightly criticizing circumcision, and asserting that the law cannot

be held as able to save. And these things, he says, are according to Peter. But we, being Jews by nature, that is, not converts (for this is what is meant by "*not sinners of the Gentiles*"), since we have recognized that it is not possible to be saved through works of the law (for there is, he says, great exactitude demanded there), have put our trust in Christ, expecting to be saved through faith in him. These things are fittingly spoken both to Peter and to the Galatians.

"*by works of the law.*" Because of the resentment felt toward him.

"*For by works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*" The things necessary to the law, and those taught by nature, are for example, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal," and the other similar precepts. (Ex. 20:13-15) But matters concerning the Sabbath, and circumcision, and leprosy, and gonorrhea, and sacrifices, and sprinklings, were particular to the law⁴. For nature did not instruct concerning these things. These, then, he calls *works of the law*. Of these, transgression is sin, and observance is not the accomplishment of perfect righteousness. For these are riddles of other peoples, yet even for the Jews they fitted the occasion. Concerning these the divine Apostle said, "*For by works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*"

— "*If, seeking to be justified in Christ.*" If, then, wishing to be justified through Christ, we have been found sinners by abandoning the law, he says, has Christ therefore become a promoter of sin to you? Do you see how by pushing to an absurd conclusion he exposes the law? If then you hold to the law and wish also to be justified through Christ, you are found sinners in abandoning the law. Has Christ therefore advocated this? By no means. The absurdity has been removed by the refutation of the proposition.

Galatians 2:18-21 *For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I consider myself to be a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live for God; I have been crucified together with Christ. Yet I live; and no longer I, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.*

We have nullified the law by allowing it, and have run to Christ. If then we seek to establish it again, we make ourselves transgressors in that we attempt to set up again what was dissolved by us. But observe his sense: those men thought themselves transgressors because they did not keep the law; he shows that they are transgressors because they hold to it.

"I consider myself a transgressor." For by once more obeying the law, I show that as a transgressor I first permitted myself, and I believed in Christ.

"Yet I." I, he says, persuaded by that law itself, made myself dead to the law. For the law announced Christ to me, and to him indeed I am dead (for I no longer live according to that one), but I follow the doctrines of this one.

"through the law died to the law." Or, I died to the Mosaic law through the law of the Gospel. How then shall I, being dead and lifeless toward it, keep it? Or by its law, and the burdensome observances in it, I have become dead in regard to sin through it. Therefore is the one who killed it worthy of being observed?

"that I might live for God." That is, the immortal and ageless life.

"With Christ" I have been *crucified together* through baptism. The law, therefore, killed what was upon it, but Christ gave life. How then shall I keep the law?

"I no longer live." Through the following constitution, by which his limbs were paralyzed. "For you have died," he says, "to the members of you that are on earth." (Col. 3:5)

— *"Christ lives in me."* Acting, he says, as master, becoming all things to me himself; and in this he lives in me, that nothing may become from me of those things that do not seem to him.

"I now live in the flesh." And not only, he says, do I live the spiritual life through Christ, but also the earthly life. How? Being under condemnation because of the law, we were about, he says, to die carnally as in the Flood. But Christ made us to live, having redeemed us from the curse of the law. Therefore not only the spiritual life, but also the earthly life was granted to us through faith in Christ. How then do we return again to the law?

"and gave himself up for me." He makes it a common property, showing that each one must acknowledge such great grace to Christ, as if he had become man for him alone.

"I do not nullify the grace." As those who still observe to the law are now nullifying the grace through Christ. To nullify is to disbelieve, to despise, to mock. Do you see where he led the argument?

"For if righteousness comes through the law." For if, he says, the law is able to save and to justify, Christ died in vain. For this reason he delivered up himself, as if the law had no power, so that he might save by his death. If indeed the law were saving, the death of the Lord would be unnecessary.

Translator notes for Galatians chapter 2.

1. stewardship [οἰκονομικῶς] In Eastern Orthodox theology and the writings of the Church Fathers, the term has a highly specialized meaning related to Divine Oikonomia (God's plan for salvation).

2. Eusebius Church History 1.12. "This is the account of Clement in the fifth book of his Hypotyposes, in which he also says that Cephas was one of the seventy disciples, a man who bore the same name as the apostle Peter, and the one concerning whom Paul says, When Cephas came to Antioch I withstood him to his face."

3. The word συνυπεκρίθησαν is the aorist (3rd person plural) of the verb συνυποκρίνομαι and means that many people pretended together, jointly pretending something to hide their real intentions or beliefs. It denotes a collective hypocritical behavior or pretense, often with the sense of complicity in a false stance.

4. The Sabbath, circumcision, regulations on leprosy and gonorrhea, sacrifices, and ritual sprinklings are classified as ceremonial laws or ordinances of the flesh that were specific to the Mosaic Law (the Old Covenant) and to the nation of Israel. These regulations, described in Leviticus 12-15, Numbers 19, and throughout the Torah, were in place until the "time of reformation"—the coming of Christ.

CHAPTER 3

That sanctification is through faith, not through the law.

Galatians 3:1-6 *You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you to not obey the truth, to whom Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified before your eyes? I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected in the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed in vain? So then, the One who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, does He do it by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? As Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.*

Having shown himself taught not by men but by the Lord, Paul now teaches with greater authority, making a comparison between the law and faith. And he calls them *foolish*. For indeed it is foolish to abandon Christ and hold to the law.

"*Who has cast a spell on you?*" He did not say, "Who has deceived you?" so that insult would not be joined to insult; but, "Who has cast a spell on you and envied you?" showing that they had previously been doing things worthy of envy.

"*to whom Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified before your eyes.*" And indeed he was crucified in Jerusalem. How then does he say, "Which is before your eyes and among you"? He shows the power of faith, and that you see things afar off. But because it was previously proclaimed he said, that is, through the written proclamation of the Scripture, as if he were saying: The proclamation has painted the cross for you, but you with the eyes of faith as if present have seen it.

— [THEODORET] For you have believed in this way: having seen the very cross of Christ. [*end of the excerpt by Theodoret*] —

"*I only wish to learn this from you.*" Since, he says, you do not pay attention to so great a privilege, I will say something brief to you. Did you receive the Holy Spirit through the works prescribed by the law, and perform so many powers and signs, or through faith? Since you were not under the law but were esteemed to be in the Spirit, how then, having abandoned faith, do you again submit yourselves to the law?

He says, "*Are you so foolish,*" because, as time has passed, you are running backward. *For having begun to be perfected in the Spirit* (for this is in general), *now you are being perfected in the flesh.* For they were being perfected in the Spirit, performing signs, but were being circumcised in the flesh. See, he did not say, "Be perfected," but, "*you are being perfected,*" indicating that, like

sheep, they were receiving circumcision, neither knowing nor suffering.

“now you are being perfected in the flesh.” He indeed spoke of the Spirit as grace, but of the flesh as conduct according to the law.

“you suffered so much in vain.” Many had been tempted while struggling for Christ. Therefore he says, *“you suffered so much,”* therefore, *“in vain.”* For if you are circumcised, you have in vain lost those things; then, for fear that he plunge them into despair, he says, *“if indeed in vain.”* For if you wished to be restored, it would not be in vain.

— [PHOTIUS] *“if indeed in vain,”* but not without loss. For it is without reason to neither take up nor set down anything. But the one who began in the Spirit, and because of this having fallen into many trials, then being changed, not only suffered without reason what he suffered, but also to his disadvantage, having lost what belonged to him, suffered because of the tribulations for Christ and the temptations. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"So then, the One who provides you with." He says that the One providing, the Spirit of God, is present among you and working, that is, producing powers of signs in you, doing these things on account of the works from the law; he says, From which you have completed signs, you ought to know the power of faith. Moreover, do not be unbelieving toward the forefather Abraham, for he too was justified by faith.

That Abraham was also justified by faith as an example for us.

Galatians 3:7-9 *You see then that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all*

the nations be blessed." So those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Since they were afraid to abandon the law, for fear that they fall away from the kinship of Abraham, he turns the argument the other way. The "then," [ἄρα] is "so therefore" [τοιγαροῦν]¹.

"that those who are of faith." Therefore these were especially opposed to the law, scorning its antiquity. It must then be shown that faith was established before the law, and that above all by it one is pleasing to God from above.

"preached the gospel beforehand." As signifying a great good, salvation through faith. For this is what the phrase "preached the gospel beforehand" indicates.

"In you shall all the nations be blessed." The "in you" that is, in your seed, who is Christ. But how are they blessed? Through faith, namely, of which Abraham is the pioneer. Moreover, the "in you" can be understood as through the faith from him. The "in you," according to your pattern and likeness, is interpreted by Saint Cyril, in the second book of his treatise on worship, which is On the Spirit and on Truth², interprets at the beginning of the book ἐν σοί as "in you," that is, to your imitation and likeness.

"Therefore those who are of faith are blessed." Those who are of faith united to Abraham and are counted as his offspring, not those who are of the flesh.

That the law does not justify, but convicts, and imposes a curse, which Christ removes.

Galatians 3:10-11 For those who are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Now that no one is justified before God

by the law is evident: the righteous shall live by faith. The law is not of faith; rather, the one who does them shall live by them.

Those who, he says, rely on *the works of the law* are under a curse. For since he feared to allow those people to rely on the law for fear that they become subject to a curse, because it is written, "*Cursed is everyone who does not continue*," (Deut. 27:26) he himself strives to show that those who continue in the law are under a curse. How? Because *no one*, he says, fulfills the law, therefore they are cursed. As if they had departed from the law and so been freed from the curse. "*Everyone who does not continue*." For this reason then those who rely on the law are under a curse, because they are not able to fulfill the law.

"*no one is justified before God*." For perhaps he may seem righteous before men.

"*the righteous shall live by faith*." For there is one way of being justified, he says, the one through faith.

"*The law is not of faith*," but from works. And from this it is clear that "*the one who does them shall live by them*." Therefore salvation in the law is through works, and not through faith.

Galatians 3:13-14 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." So that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Paul removes a prevailing contradiction. Abraham, he says, was justified by faith for the very reason that he was among those who existed before the law, not being subject to the yoke of the law.

For, he says, faith indeed justifies, let us be persuaded, but those who did not become subject to the law, just like Abraham. But we, having already become subject to the law, if we abandon it and rely on faith alone, who will redeem us from the curse of the law, because it is written, he says, "Cursed are those who do not remain faithful to the law"? (Gal. 3:10) This therefore resolves it, showing Christ to have ransomed us from the curse of the law by his own curse.

And rightly it says, "*Christ redeemed us.*" For having paid the price, himself to become a curse, he has bought us from the curse of the law. See then: we were under a curse because we did not fulfill the law. Christ was not under this curse; for he fulfilled it; and yet he accepted a curse which he did not owe, namely that of *being hung on a tree*, (quoting Deut. 21:23) in order to free us from our curse. Just as if someone were to ransom those ordered to die by choosing death for them.

"*might come to the Gentiles.*" For it is said, Christ was willing to be accursed so that it might be to the Gentiles, that is, to those who do not possess the law, the things of the promise of Abraham might come. And let it come through this Christ. How through him? Since the promises are bound to the seed of Abraham, and his seed is Christ. Therefore Christ, insofar as he is and is conceived as a man, having inherited the promises, bestowed these upon the rest of the human race who believe in him.

"*that we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*" He says that in this way we receive the Spirit. For the curse was removed by the cross, and righteousness has been affected through faith in Christ; and from righteousness comes the drawing of the Advocate, the Spirit. Indeed, the Spirit was also in the promise. For the one who said, "In you all the nations shall be blessed," (Gen. 12:3, 22:18) promised the blessing through the outpouring of the Spirit.

That the blessings are not from the law, but from the promise. But the law is a preparer through conviction.

Galatians 3:15-18 *Brothers, I speak according to men. Yet a human-confirmed covenant no one annuls or adds to. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your seed," who is Christ. Now this I say: a covenant confirmed beforehand by God in Christ, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul the promise so as to make it void. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise. But God granted it to Abraham by promise.*

Since from the signs given by them, and from the revealing of the Holy Spirit, and from the cross of Christ, and from those things by which Abraham was saved, faith was shown to save, and not the law; now he seeks to persuade them by a human example. For the phrase "*according to men*" stands for "according to a human argument and example." And he rightly calls them brothers, having called them foolish. For it is necessary sometimes to rebuke sharply, and sometimes to soften.

"*a human-confirmed covenant.*" See what he wishes to prove by the example of the covenant. "I will bless," says God to Abraham, "and in his seed shall all the nations be blessed." (Gen. 22:18) Now the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, is Christ. The law was given four hundred and thirty years later. If then, he says, the law committed the blessings and righteousness, the promise and the covenant of God to Abraham become void. But a man's covenant no one annuls; and the covenant of God is annulled, and it lasted a long time, namely four hundred and thirty years. For if that one promised to bless through Christ, but the law instead of Christ blesses, then the covenant of God to Abraham is annulled.

— [PHOTIUS] “Which he says has been *confirmed*.” For it was authorized by an oath. And he says precisely, “has been confirmed.” For the nullified thing is also transferred, just as the law itself, into the Gospel. It is ordered additionally, that is, it adds on. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"Now the promises." As if they had been pledged.

"Now this I say: a covenant." For the sake of clarity he continues the discourse.

"by God in Christ." For the promise was to Christ. For he said, "In your seed all the nations shall be blessed." For this is, "in you." And the seed of Abraham according to the flesh is Christ.

— [PHOTIUS] “*which came four hundred and thirty years later.*” Four hundred and thirty years are therefore gathered: from Abraham’s seventy-fifth year to the one hundredth (when Isaac was born) are counted twenty-five years; Isaac was sixty years old (when Jacob was born); Jacob was ninety-five years old (when he begot Joseph); Joseph was one hundred and ten years old; the years spent in Egypt were one hundred and forty-four (from Joseph’s death, according to the translation of the Seventy Translators³, as appears in Exodus 12): together four hundred and thirty-four. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

“For if the inheritance is of the law.” He himself so interpreted it. For if the blessing came through the law and not through Christ, the promise and covenant of God is annulled and terminated. He gave by the promise. He gave the blessing, he says, by the promise of God and not by the law.

Galatians 3:19-20 *What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed to whom the promise referred should come; it was administered*

through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one, but God is one.

"What then is the law?" As it was said by way of contrast to it. Why then was the law given, he says, if it cannot save?

"It was added because of transgressions." It was not given in vain, he says, but in order that what appears to be from God may not be transgressed, so that even small faults may be prevented. "added." He rightly says "added" to show that the law is not original, as the promises are, but was given as something following arising from what preceded.

"until the seed to whom the promise referred should come." But the law was not given for eternity, he says, but until Christ comes, to whom it has been promised that all the nations will be blessed.

"administered through angels." The law was given, that is, enjoined, served and commanded through the intervention of messengers, whether of the priests or indeed of angels.

It is said to have been given into *the hand of a mediator*, that is, of Christ. For he wishes to show that the law was given under Christ, so that he might also be the Lord to abolish it. For the one who gives also has power to abolish. He calls Christ *a mediator* because he mediates to the Father and to men, as it were toward friendship, and reconciles us to God, to whom we were at enmity.

— [CHRYSOSTOM] "*by the hand of a mediator*." Here he calls Christ the Mediator, showing that he also gave the law beforehand.

"Now a mediator is not of one, but God is one." The mediator, he says, is the mediator of two. Of whom then is Christ the mediator? Clearly of both men and God. Do you see how he shows that he both gave the law himself, and would also be Master and to loosen it again?

"*Now a mediator is not of one.*" He says therefore that Moses indeed mediated for the giving of the law, but he mediated for only one nation.

— [GENNADIUS] It is necessary, however, that the one who truly is to mediate should mediate toward the one God of all nations, not on behalf of one nation, but should make the mediation common for all, since the God of all nations is one. And this mediator would not be a mere man like Moses, but Christ the Son of God, both God truly at the same time, and truly man, and by kinship toward each nature uniting the two into one in himself. "For he himself is our peace, who has made both one." (Eph. 2:14) [*end of the excerpt by Gennadius*] —

"*is not of one.*" For there is not one mediator, but God and men. And if he himself mediated, he says, he himself shall save.

"*God is one.*" If then a mediator must necessarily be someone between two parties or more who are different from one another, and God is one, it is clear that he interceded between God and humans and reconciled us to him. If then Christ reconciled us and not the law, it is evident that Christ and the faith in him save, and not the law.

— *in another way.* [PHOTIUS] God is the one who gave both the Law and the Gospel, and who acted as mediator and reconciled to the Father. That is to say, he is the same who is Christ. For even if the things mediated are two, the mediator is one; for he must be one. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

Galatians 3:21-22 *Then is the law against the promises of God? Certainly not. For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on the law; but Scripture has limited everything*

under sin, so that the promise might be given to those who believe in Jesus Christ through faith.

— [GENNADIUS] Therefore *the promises* bless, but the *law* makes accursed; consequently the law was given against the promises of God, that is, to hinder them from blessing. [*end of the excerpt by Gennadius*] —

This indeed resolves the opposition, both by what follows and by the prohibition: For let it not be, he says.

— *In another way.* [PHOTIUS] “*Then is the law against the promises of God?*” On the contrary, it dissolves them. For some might say, the law has seized the entitlement of the promises, and has stood against them. But may it not be. For if it had the power to give life, one would reasonably think it to be set against the promises and to have seized their entitlement, since it is able to justify by its own power. But since it has no power to do any such thing, neither to give life nor to justify, it is clear that it was not appointed against the promises. For these promises will show their proper right, saving and justifying the one who is of faith. And see the wisdom. What another might have brought forward as an accusation against the law, that it neither gives life nor justifies, this very thing he has turned into a defense of the charge and into its praise. For this reason, he says, the law was not set against the promises, because it had no power either to save or to justify. Not only did he not act against them, but in a certain way he cooperated with them and served them. For what he did not save nor justify by other means, he urged to take refuge in faith. And by which he brought them to faith, he also conspired to bring about the fulfillment of the promises. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"For if a law had been given that could impart life." For on the one hand, he says, the law had the power to save, so that faith would not even be necessary. But for this reason it did not have the power to give life, so that faith might have room; except that

it beforehand purified and led as a kind of guardian⁴ [παιδαγωγοῦ] and made us capable and receptive of faith. How then does the one who makes progress by the promises oppose the promises of God? It is therefore neither possible nor reasonable to say that the law was given for the removal of the blessings.

"then righteousness would indeed have been based on the law." But now, Paul says, he himself did not have strength, so that faith might have strength.

"but Scripture has limited," that is, he allowed it to be confined and, as it were, to squeeze everyone into sin, God, through his various proper reasons and administrations.

But Scripture says that faith in Christ would be given a place. For even formerly the law, by being transgressed, taught men that they are sinners. But having taught, it did not free them from sin, so that from now men might gladly approach by faith to be delivered from their sins by the one who wills to save. And all this, he says, happened so that the promises made to Abraham, that the nations would be blessed, might be given to those who accept them through faith in Christ.

— [PHOTIUS] *"but Scripture has limited everything."* The Law, he says, as it were contained and shut up all into sin, proved them to be sinners. How? For he said, *"For it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them;"* and this is impossible. For not only did not all men do everything, but not even some of them did all, but at most the more visible of them did the greater part. Therefore whoever did not do everything was under a curse and sin. So they all were shut up and found to be in sin. Therefore, they are able to obtain the promise only through faith. For from the Law, being rather exposed as into sin, they all were shown. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

— [THEODORET] The Divine Scripture reproved both those before the law and those under the law. It reproved some for transgressing the law of nature, and others for transgressing the Mosaic law. To both sets, however, the promised salvation through faith was offered as a solution. For again it placed the word “convicted” instead of “reproved.” [*end of the excerpt by Theodore*] —

Galatians 3:23-26 *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, restrained until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law became our guardian until Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But when faith came, we were no longer under a guardian. For all of you are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

“*before faith came.*” For indeed it did not afford the kind of security that would prevent most people from committing sins.

“*restrained.*” Being guarded, he says, toward the faith that was to come. How? For the law, which was exposing our sins but was not able to rescue, did nothing else than urge those who were more eager to run toward the faith that would be revealed for the deliverance from sins.

— [OECUMENIUS] “*until the faith that was to come would be revealed.*” He declared that the faith in Christ had been predestined from above, but has now been revealed to men, when the Incarnation also took place. [*end of the excerpt by Oecumenius*] —

“*So the law became our guardian.*” It prepares the way, of course, for the faith that is in Christ, by pointing out to us our sins and making us ready to run to the revealed faith and to forgiveness. Therefore the law is not contrary to faith. For the guardian is not

opposed to the teacher, but desires the same thing as he and beforehand teaches certain disciplines.

"until Christ." For just as the guardian instructs the children beforehand, so that when they go to teachers they may be more ready to learn and to receive from those who teach them, so too the law, by showing us beforehand that we are sinners, made nothing else than readier to run to Christ when He appeared, who was the longed-for deliverance from the sins that had become evident to us through the law. Therefore the example of the guardian has been most aptly spoken of him.

"by faith." For he was proving the sins, and being unable to justify, he was referring us to Christ.

"But when faith came." Therefore, then, the perfection and the adoption as sons being given.

"we were no longer under a guardian." For being children, it was necessary to act under a guardian, although not having become fully grown. "Proof of perfection, to be made sons to God."

— [CHRYSOStOM] *"through faith in Christ Jesus."* Through the faith in Christ Jesus. For such is the construction. See also earlier, when he says "sons of Abraham," now he calls them *"sons of God."*

Galatians 3:27-29 *For all who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

Since he called us children of God in a splendid way, he also speaks of the manner in which we became so. But it is fitting to

say regarding the preceding sense, "*All who were baptized into Christ have become children of God*"; for this is the consequence. Yet now he has said the same thing in another way, more appropriately expressing it. For if we have put on the Son of God, and as it were have clothed ourselves with his image, it is clear that we are also sharers in his sonship. Even if he possesses it by nature, we have it by adoption.

"for you are all one in Christ Jesus." To be clothed with the one form and one likeness of Christ, and to have him as one head, and to bring all together into one body. He says, *"in Christ Jesus."* For through him we have being, through his cross, and his death, and his grace.

"if you belong to Christ, then." If then you are the form and body of Christ, he says, it is fittingly that you are the seed of Abraham. For since previously he said that Christ is the seed of Abraham according to the flesh (and to that seed of Abraham the promises were given, that is, to Christ), now the same thing is summed up. If you are, he says, the body of Christ, you are also the seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise given to his seed; Christ is, he says, the author of these things for us, having made us his body, and therefore also introducing us into the seed of Abraham, not, however, the law.

Translator notes for Galatians chapter 3.

1. While ἄρα indicates a simple "then," τοιγαροῦν is more emphatic and formal. Τοιγαροῦν is a formal Greek conjunctive particle meaning "wherefore then," "so therefore," or "consequently". It emphasizes a conclusion based on preceding arguments, functioning as a strong logical connector. It is a compound of τοι (truly/surely), γάρ (for), and οὖν (then)

2. Cyril of Alexandria, On the Veneration and Worship in Spirit and Truth, 68.219. [God speaking clearly, that, "In you All the nations shall be blessed." The phrase "in you" would signify, in likeness, your own; thus

Paul says knowingly: "But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations shall be blessed in you.' So those who are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham." Therefore circumcision is a sign of faith in uncircumcision, and it is not justified by works of the law, and the distinctions of circumcision in the flesh appear inferior to those gains through faith. For he was called a friend of God.]

3. Seventy translators means what is called today the "Greek Septuagint".

4. "guardian" [παιδαγωγῷ] the Mosaic Law is described as a παιδαγωγός—a "tutor" "pedagogue" "guardian"—designed to lead people toward Christ.

CHAPTER 4

That those who were under the law should be subject to condemnation.

Galatians 4:1-3 I say that, insofar as the heir is a child, he differs nothing from a slave; he is master of all things, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. So also we, when we were children, were enslaved under the elemental principles of the world.

For what reason? Because it was decided by the father that he should manage nothing until the lawful age. And he rightly produced the example of the infant. For just as that child, though master of all things, is prevented by his infancy from exercising control over his possessions, so we too, because our mind has long been youthful, are hindered from being deemed worthy of adoption as children of God.

"when we were children." He says " children " not in respect of age but of knowledge of God, indicating that God had willed to grant these things from the beginning, that is, adoption as sons,

but that we are responsible for the delay, being children in our minds. Having then been permitted, by God's patience, to be enslaved to the elements, that is, to the course of the sun and the moon. For being enslaved to Sabbaths and new moons and observances of days, which were prescribed by the law, he says that for the most part we were subject to the sun and the moon, from which come the days and the months and the Sabbaths. Very desirous indeed to reduce those things in the law, he stops and says, "Under the law we were in bondage," he said "*under the elemental principles.*"

— [THEODORET] When, he says, we were infants and immature, the law acted as a sort of guardian and steward over us. (For he spoke of the basic elements of the world, judicial observations.) Since night and day are named after the sun and moon, and from days weeks and months and years are formed, the law ordered that Sabbaths and new moons and annual festivals and the weeks of years be observed; for this reason he said: "under the elemental principles," since time is also constituted from these. [*end of the excerpt by Theodoret*] —

— [GENNADIUS] "*under the elemental principles of the world.*" With the oversight of guardians and managers who, for the benefit of the young, guide those not yet mature, he received the elements of the world, with which we were enslaved because our knowledge was incomplete. Therefore, I do not think he took the sun and the moon as part of the order of guardians, because submission to those would be harmful; rather he calls them the elements of the world, or the elementary and introductory law. (For he was also writing to those faithful from the Jews, and here indicates the slightly aforementioned things, and that if you are circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.) He calls them elements: day, water, fire, which were observations of the law that brought into slavery. Days, namely Sabbaths and new moons and circumcisions. Water, in bodily purifications and baptisms. Fire,

in not kindling fire on the Sabbaths, but in eating unseasoned food. See what Eusebius said about this as a foreigner in the fourth discourse of the Proof of the Gospel ¹. [*end of the excerpt by Gennadius*] —

Galatians 4:4-7 *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. For you are sons; God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son. And if a son, then also an heir through God by Christ Jesus.*

“*But when the fullness of time had come,*” namely the time which it was necessary, he says, for Christ to come. For Daniel the prophet assigned the time of Christ’s coming, which reached its accomplishment in the reign of Caesar Augustus, when also the incarnate economy of Christ began. (Dan. 9:24-27)

"born of a woman." Therefore he did not say "by a woman," so that you would not suppose his coming to have been by way of the Mother of God [Θεοτόκου], but "of a woman," showing that from her the Lord took his body.

— [PHOTIUS] “*born under the law.*” For he became under the law, having also been circumcised, in order, he says, to redeem those who were under the law and under the curse, by the cross, and to be altogether made under the law. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"so that we might receive adoption as sons." For he not only freed us from evil, having removed the curse of the law, but also bestowed adoption. And by saying "*we might receive*" he showed

it to be appointed from above, and that we are not able to receive it because of the childishness of our understanding.

“*For you are sons.*” And from where, he says, have we been deemed worthy of adoption as sons? From where? From the adoption by the Spirit who descended to prepare us and to teach (for this the One *Crying* indicates): to call God Father; which would not have been, if we had not been deemed worthy of adoption. And therefore have courage, O man, that you are no longer a slave, but a son of God and his heir. Because of the Son by nature having been incarnate and having taken on our whole humanity, you are no longer a slave and under the yoke of the law. How then is it not absurd for those who have become sons of God, through Christ and through the Spirit, to turn back again to the law? And behold the emphasis of the holy Trinity. The Father sent, the Son became incarnate, and the Spirit cooperated, who also having come into our hearts, teaches to say, *Abba, Father*. “*also an heir through God by Christ Jesus.*” Through his cross.

Galatians 4:8-12a *But then, not knowing God, you were enslaved to gods that are not by nature. But now, having known God, or rather, having been known by God, how do you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, for fear that I have labored in vain among you. Become as I am, for I also am as you are.*

Paul argues with those from the Jews, showing that the observance of days and months and seasons and years and whatever in the law is observance is idolatry. For this, he says, is nothing else than worshiping the moon and the sun, by which the days have their observance. He said this about property, wanting to depart from

the law. For those who preach circumcision also proclaimed such observances.

"*But now, having known God.*" For it is not you, he says, who find God by your own work, but He himself, while you were wandering in error, seized you.

"*how do you turn back again to,*" He discusses again concerning the sun and the moon and the stars, from which are the observations of the days. But he calls them poor and weak, as having no strength at all. The word "*again*" has much emphasis; after adoption, he says, and being known by God.

— [CYRIL] Elements of the world, the particles of the entire cosmos. [*end of the excerpt by Cyril*] —

— [OECUMENIUS] He calls them weak and poor, not because of their insignificance. (For what is more magnificent than heaven and earth? What more honorable than sun and moon and stars?) But because they are deprived of mind and life and sensation. [*end of the excerpt by Oecumenius*] —

You observe days. From this it is clear that the false apostles proclaimed not only circumcision, but also observances of these, having taken their origin from the law, yet having deviated from the law.

"*I am afraid.*" See, their insides are in turmoil, and Paul is afraid. The phrase "*for fear that*" still indicates those standing and not yet fully shipwrecked. And it gives them hope that if they are willing to recover, their labor will not be *in vain* for them; as he said, Remember my toil and sweat for you, and do not frustrate my anguish.

"*Become as I am.*" Yet the words are addressed to those from Judea. Become as I am. "Be imitators of me," Paul says, "for I also, having set aside the law, ran to faith." For even I, he says, was as

you are, observing the law and carefully practicing it in many respects.

"*for I also am as you are.*" I longed intensely for the law as well, but see how I have been changed. "You also," he says, "envy that change."

Galatians 4:12b-17 *Brothers, I beg you, you have wronged me in nothing. But you know that because of weakness of the flesh I once preached the gospel to you. And you did not despise nor spit out my trial which was in my flesh. Rather you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Who then was the blessing to you? For I bear witness to you that if it were possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. So have I become your enemy while I tell you the truth? They envy you, not rightly, but they desire to exclude you, that you might envy them.*

— [PHOTIUS²] He appeals to them, considering their salvation as his own. He passes through their acts of gratitude, and the honors by which they honored him, and how greatly they regarded him, wishing to set this right, namely, that the insults now uttered against them by him were not spoken out of any dislike or hatred (for how, he says, could he have been hostile toward you, having treated you with great consideration?); but that what was said came from a mind that was anxious and loving.

"*But you know that because of weakness.*" That is, because of bodily weakness, namely, after bonds and blows and imprisonments, which I endured at the hands of those opposed to the preaching.

"*I once preached the gospel.*" What do I say, Paul says, did you not wrong me? Therefore you showed me great honor. For even

while being flogged and persecuted (for he says this was a weakness of the flesh), I was proclaiming the gospel to you. And yet seeing me suffer these things, you neither were scandalized at me nor spat upon me. For you did not despise, he says, my trial in my flesh, a trial of good things again: the wounds, the imprisonments, the persecutions.

"*Rather you received me as an angel of God.*" How then is it not unreasonable, he says, that one who is being persecuted and driven away should be received by you as an angel, and even as the Lord himself? Yet he is spat upon while he counsels and exhorts those things that lead to salvation.

— [PHOTIUS] "*Who then was the blessing to you?*" He was someone, not asked as a question, but as if marveling and lifting up their former faith and the blessing upon that faith. What it was, how great it was, wondrous, he says: from what great blessedness you have fallen. Or by interrogation, What was it? Remember, he says, how great your blessedness was: for I was blessing you very greatly; but now what? I reproach; therefore I am held in hatred. But why do I reproach? For your salvation. For if this were not so, how could I, without offering any other pretext of yours, the one who praises and blesses, have come to reproach?" [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"*the blessing to you.*" Who was, he says, the blessing to you, whom I and many others blessed you for, concerning obedience and submission to the Gospel? Who then was he? he says; for now I do not see him. Where, he says, are the zealously accomplished works of faith? for he has put the who instead of where.

"*your eyes.*" I know, Paul says, that you regard me as more precious than your own eyes because of my long-standing preaching.

“*So I have become your enemy.*” Elsewhere, he says, I do not know any cause for enmity other than that I deliver to you truths and teachings that lead to salvation, by which it would even have been fitting for you to increase your love toward me.

— [OECUMENIUS] “*They envy you.*” He says they do not welcome the same faith in Christ for your benefit, but in order to exclude you from it and persuade themselves to follow, because such a plan has been formulated against your deception. [*end of the excerpt by Oecumenius*³] —

“*not rightly.*” For there is also good envy, when someone so envies that he imitates virtue. And there is also bad envy, when someone envies in such a way as to drive the virtuous person out of virtue.

“*but they desire to exclude you.*” Paul says, They wish to shut you off and to carry you away from the true knowledge, so that having become your teachers themselves, they may lead you to the same envy and imitation. For this reason they carry you away from true knowledge and bring you to the law.

Galatians 4:18-20 *It is good, however, to strive enthusiastically in what is good always, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, again I labor in birth until Christ be formed in you. I would indeed be present with you now, and to change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.*

He wishes to show that those who now are overturning them, and persuading them to observe to the law, and by this preparing them to become zealous imitators of it, had long ago envied them in the knowledge of the Gospel, when Paul was present and was teaching them.

"It is good, however," he says, *"to strive enthusiastically in what is good always, and not only when I am present with you."* And he shows that they have been deceived during his absence.

"My little children." Even if, Paul says, you have corrupted the form of Christ and the image upon you, yet you are still my little children. And he says "little children," those small and unbegotten, or aborted infants, and lacking birth. For this reason he did not say "children," but "my little children."

"until Christ be formed in you." You have corrupted, he says, the image of Christ in you, which you wore through baptism. As many as were baptized into Christ, you have clothed yourselves with Christ, and you have lost his form, and his being as members. There is therefore need of another birth, which will again imprint upon you the divine form of Christ. What then? *Again I labor* you by teaching. Again I beget, through catechesis, until you are again imprinted with the divine form of Christ. What then do the Novatians say in response to these things? For behold, I write these things plainly to the faithful.

— [CYRIL] Those whom I labor, until the great and excellent characters of the divinity of Christ be formed into your minds. *[end of the excerpt from Cyril of Alexandria⁴]* —

"I would indeed be present with you now." — [OECUMENIUS] See love. "I am not content," he says, with letters; I sought to be present with you, and to exchange weeping and mourning for teaching delivered in words, so that, he says, I taught you with weeping. For I too am at a loss what to say about you. How is it that you who were exalted by the knowledge of the Gospel have been cast down and dragged to the ground, again held by the law? *[end of the excerpt by Oecumenius]* —

"and to change my tone." For some, to turn it into weeping; for others, to marvel at the certainty.

That in the free woman the things of Abraham are represented to the genuine child, one must not be enslaved by the law.

Galatians 4:21-24a *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the freewoman. But the one of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, the one of the freewoman through the promise, which things are spoken allegorically.*

"Tell me," Paul says, "you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law." But "desire" is fitting; for the matter was one of ill-timed quarrelsomeness on their part.

"do you not hear the law." What, he says, does he say about himself? and furthermore he brings testimony from Genesis. For it is his habit to call the entire Old Testament "the law." "do you not hear the law," that is, the book of Genesis? and see how he constructs his argument. "you who desire," he says, "to be under the law, do you not hear the law." For therefore you will be convinced by him. The law itself, he says (if you know what is in it), advises that you depart from it. If then you are persuaded by it, withdraw from it. But observe the construction.

"*Abraham had two sons.*" He wishes to show that those who are Abraham's offspring by physical kinship, that is, the Jews, are related by flesh, while those who are brought into Abraham's offspring by faith, that is, the Christians, are offspring of Abraham by promise. But even then, he says, the son according to the flesh, Ishmael, was cast out, just as now his fleshly kin, the Jews, have been. And he calls the son according to the promise, Isaac, who remained inside, just as now, he says, the kin according to the promise, the Christians. Do you see that the law knows how to expel those who belong to it alone, that is, the Jews?

“But the one of the bondwoman.” Properly he speaks of Ishmael according to the flesh. For by the law of nature he was born of the flesh; for Isaac was not by the law of the flesh (How could a hundred-year-old man beget?) but by the individual promise.

— [PHOTIUS] Therefore do not assume that being related to Abraham according to the flesh is enough; let this be corrected and let it be believed that unless you are born as children by the promise of Abraham, that is, members and fellow-body of Christ (for he is, by promise, the seed of Abraham), you are outside the promise. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

“which things are spoken allegorically.” That is, they were types of the future covenants: the births of these two children. For not only the visible things, but also other matters are signified by the births. *“which things are spoken allegorically.”* Instead of what is otherwise meant. For it does not recount the history, but teaches the things foreshadowed in the history. For he introduces:

Galatians 4:24b-27 *For these are two covenants. One indeed is born from Mount Sinai into slavery, or is someone named Hagar. For Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia. And she corresponds to Jerusalem. And she serves with her children. But the upper Jerusalem is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: Rejoice, barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who do not suffer birth, because many are the children of the desert more than of her who has a husband.*

Mount Sinai is in Arabia. There the law was given to Moses. It is near Jerusalem. That mountain Sinai itself, in the language of the Arabs, is called Hagar. And, it is said, therefore: Hagar and Sarah were types of the two covenants. The slave-girl was a type of the Old Covenant, for she begets servants of the law. The free woman

is a type of the New Covenant, for she bears those freed from the yoke of the law. For, it is said, Mount Sinai, where the law was given, is neighboring to Jerusalem, and in the Arabs' tongue it has the same name as Hagar the slave, Hagar herself being likewise called, as from the name, the type becoming near to the truth:

"*She is born into slavery.*" That of the law.

"*or is someone named Hagar.*" He says: "someone" is a covenant, which has the form of Hagar. And therefore: for the mountain Sinai in the language of the Arabs is called Hagar.

"*corresponds to,*" that is, it touches, it borders.

— [PHOTIUS] "*to Jerusalem.*" That is, to the one here on earth. So the upper and the free one, both stand apart. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"*And she serves.*" This, he says, is the old covenant given on Mount Sinai; it serves with her children, the Jews. It serves under the law.

"*the upper Jerusalem.*" The one is the figure of Hagar; in these things, behold also the figure of Sarah. The figure of her is the upper Jerusalem, that is, the heavenly. For that city of the faithful is free from the observances of the law, and is our mother, he says. Therefore Hagar fulfills the figure of the Old Covenant and of the Jews. But Sarah of the New Covenant and of us. And he called the upper Jerusalem also the Church.

"*For it is written.*" And therefore, he says, Sarah was a type of the Jerusalem above, that is, of the Church, because she too being barren and without children, like the church once from the Gentiles, triumphed in offspring over Hagar; and the Church triumphed over the synagogue. And Isaiah is witness to these things: "Rejoice, you barren, who do not bear." (Isa. 54:1) Is Isaiah speaking to the Church composed of Gentiles? He commands her

to cry out with joy. "Break forth now," either the barrenness into fruitfulness, or break forth the voice of gladness.

"because many are the children of the desert." He calls the Church from among the nations a desert and barren. For it was a desert of every good thing before they believed in Christ.

"more than of her who has a husband." He called him a man having or directing, governing and providing for the synagogue of the Jews: or as formerly enjoying the providence of God.

Galatians 4:28-31 *But we, brothers, are children of the promise according to Isaac. Yet as at that time the one born according to the flesh persecuted the one according to the Spirit, so also now. But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son. For the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free woman. Stand then firm in the freedom by which Christ has made us free, and do not again submit yourselves to a yoke of slavery.*

Not only was the Church barren as Sarah was, nor afterwards did she have much offspring like her, but it was begotten in the same manner. For Sarah did not bear Isaac by the law of nature, but by divine grace. Nor does the Church give birth by the law of nature in the baptismal font, but by divine grace. Do you see how the type in every respect agrees with the truth?

"according to Isaac." For we were not begotten according to nature, but according to grace, as Isaac through the promise.

— [THEODORET] Let this not trouble us either, that those entrusted are driven out by the unbelievers. For we find something

of this kind also in the type, but it in no way prevailed against Isaac. [*end of the excerpt by Theodoret*] —

He says, "*But we, brothers, are children of the promise according to Isaac.*" Therefore being free, we ought not to be enslaved under the law of Moses.

"*Yet as at that time.*" And from that very fact that the faithful were persecuted by the Jews (for they were then persecuted), he shows the pattern to be true. For even Ishmael, who was born according to the flesh, persecuted Isaac, who was born according to the Spirit and the promise. "*But what does the Scripture say?*"

Above, where the chapter was being interpreted, that: "you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law," (Gal. 4:21) we said this was contrived concerning Paul, namely that even the law itself, that is the old covenant, seemed to need to permit the law and Judaism, and behold it has been demonstrated. For when Hagar was a type of the Jews and of the old law, and Sarah and Isaac of the faithful and of the new covenant, in that very old covenant Hagar and Ishmael were cast out (for, he says, she cast out the bondwoman and her son), plainly in that very old one the expulsion of the Jews was foreshadowed. Do you see that one ought not to hold to the law? Because those who trusted in it were cast out? Behold then that even the old covenant in its power counseled not to hold to the law, to cast out those who adhere only to it, that is, the Jews. For if one must always conform to the law and the old covenant, Hagar and her child, who were a type of the Jews, would not have been cast out. Isaac alone inherited, who was a type of those who trust in Christ. And again, she was not cast out merely because she was persecuted, but that she might not become a sharer of the inheritance.

"*Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the bondwoman.*" If then we are not children of a bondwoman, nor of slaves, how do we submit ourselves to the servitude of the law? We are not, since

Hagar is not our example, but of the Jews. For Sarah is our example.

“in the freedom by which Christ has made us free.” The law enslaved; Christ has freed us from the curse of the law. Therefore, he says, one must stand in the freedom given by Christ. But the *“Stand firm”* [Στήκετε] indicates being unshaken.

“do not again submit yourselves to a yoke of slavery.” The word again indicates their insensitivity. And by saying yoke, it shows the heavy burden of the law’s slavery.

Translator notes for Galatians chapter 4.

1. Eusebius, Proof of the Gospel 4, 8:1-5
2. The Patrologia Graeca attributes this excerpt to Photius but I found no confirmation for this.
3. Staab claims that this excerpt is from Gennadius and Oecumenius. Probably an error.
4. Cyril of Alexandria, Glaphyrorum in Genesis, PG 69.3.141A

CHAPTER 5

That our calling is not subject to circumcision and law because of the suffering of Christ.

Galatians 5:1-8 Behold, I Paul say to you, that if you are circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. You are cut off from Christ; you who would be justified by the law have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of

righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision benefits anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working by love. You did run well; who hindered you that you should not obey the truth? This persuasion comes not from him that called you.

"Behold, I Paul." He used the authority of the name instead of any proof.

"Christ will profit you nothing." Why? Because the one who is circumcised, as is clear, despises the grace of Christ and believes that he will be justified by the law. Therefore he who does not trust in Christ would not even take advantage himself.

"that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Against the statement, he says, that no longer does one receive anything from Christ, which is more grievous than ten thousand Gehennas¹. And such persons lay upon themselves a useless burden. For he who keeps the law in one point will be compelled to keep it in all things, since all will fail. What, then, is weightier than the observances of the law?

"You are cut off from Christ." You have been severed, you have fallen away from him; all things pertaining to Christ and his grace are now useless to you.

"you who would be justified by the law." Instead of saying, "you are eager to be justified," he said something like this. You who are zealous to be justified by the law have fallen away from grace, and from the law you will not be justified.

"we through the Spirit." For we the faithful, he says, do not expect to be saved by the law, but through the visitation of the Holy Spirit.

"by faith wait for the hope of righteousness," expecting to be saved by a share of grace. Well placed is the phrase "by faith." For our

faith must be considered, and therefore one receives justification through the Spirit by faith.

"neither circumcision benefits anything." Paul says circumcision, not that which is from faith, as if he were saying: Those who are enrolled in the new covenant will not gain anything from foreskin, just as they will not benefit from circumcision.

"but faith working by love." For it is not enough merely to believe in Christ; rather this faith must be active and preserved and in a sense rekindled by love toward Christ. It is implied that those who believed but did not love Christ have defected to the law.

"who hindered you?" The "who" is not of one asking, but of one sorrowful, as if he had said: You were reaching perfection, what has happened? Who has had such power as to prevent you from obeying the truth of the Gospel?

"This persuasion," that is, being persuaded to be circumcised by those who tell you.

"This does not come from Christ, who calls you to His faith²." So he said. You are not called by Christ for that reason, so as to be persuaded by those who give such counsel. For calling belongs to God alone, but the being persuaded belongs to those who hear.

Galatians 5:9-12 *A little yeast infuses the whole batch of dough. I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will think nothing otherwise. But the one who is troubling you will bear the judgment, whoever he may be. Now, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Then the offense of the cross has been abolished. I wish those who are unsettling you would even weaken themselves.*

So that they might not say, "What great thing have we done by keeping only one commandment of the law?" he says, "One?" and what is that?

"A little yeast infuses the whole batch of dough." For just as that infuses the whole batch, he says, so your circumcision will certainly bring in Judaism to perfection, unless you are corrected.

"I have confidence in you in the Lord." "Be of good courage," he says, "be of good courage in the Lord, for you will be corrected, and you will take no thought contrary to my teaching." This is by way of encouragement.

"But the one who is troubling you." You may be disturbed, yet nevertheless those who brought you into this will not thereby be freed from punishment, but will bear and undergo this condemnation.

"Now, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision." Since they were insulting him they said, "He is a hypocrite," but elsewhere he does not say that he is persecuted by the Jews, and you yourselves know it. Therefore if I preach circumcision, it is unnecessary for me to be persecuted. What then? Did he not circumcise Timothy? But this we say was done according to a practical convenience, in order that he might be well received by the Jews. See, however, he did not say, If I wrought circumcision, but, *if I am still preaching*. For do not, Paul says, treat what was done for practical convenience as a doctrinal rule.

"Then the offense of the cross has been abolished." Indeed, he says, if one must be circumcised, and I proclaim this as well, the Jews' combative opposition to the cross and their fight against it is ended, and they no longer struggle with it. For now they detest the cross because circumcision and the law are being undone by it.

"I wish those who are unsettling you." Concerning you I care; but concerning those who have raised themselves against you, as

though suffering from incurable diseases, no longer. Therefore let them not only be circumcised, but would that they had also cut themselves off.

"*would even.*" Would that they had also utterly cut themselves off, those who offer you the deceit of circumcision.

Signature according to the freedom of the spirit.

Galatians 5:13-15 *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, be careful for fear that you be consumed by one another.*

"*For you were called to freedom.*" For we are no longer under the law but serve in freedom.

"*as an opportunity for the flesh.*" Since he calls freedom both upward and downward, and that we have been freed through Christ from the law, he feared they might assume that the yoke of the law had been loosened and that from this time it is permissible to do whatever we wish. This is therefore corrected and he says: Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, to serve its desires and passions.

"*but through love.*" Since he removed the yoke of the law, he imposes another, that of love, both lighter and stronger than that. And the phrase, "*serve,*" indicates the command essential in love. And rightly so the "*one another.*" For they had been infected with love of glory, those who stirred up opposition to circumcision.

"*For the whole law.*" If you really, he says, wish to fulfill the law, do not do so by circumcising, but by loving one another; in this way you fulfill it.

"*But if you bite and devour one another.*" And by "to bite" he says even more emphatically "to devour," inserting doctrines of this sort. For not so much body is expended by being devoured as the soul is corrupted by such doctrines.

"*be careful for fear that.*" But he was terrified by this.

"*that you be consumed by one another.*" For this faction, he says, also has it in its power to harm you who are causing the disturbance. It is reasonable that he indicates this not only concerning doctrines, but also regarding clashes, and greed, and other injustices.

Galatians 5:16-21 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to one another, so that you may not do what you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, filthiness, idolatry, sorceries, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, revelries, dissensions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, mocking, and things like these. I warn you beforehand, as I also warned you before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

"*walk by the Spirit.*" Live and conduct yourselves according to the Spirit, he says, and do what seems to belong to it, and you will not fulfill the desire of the flesh.

"*For the flesh desires against the Spirit.*" By *flesh* here he means the fleshly and evil desires. And by *spirit*, the grace of the Holy Spirit toward virtue. And he says: Evil opposes virtue, and virtue in turn opposes evil, fulfilling the role of a certain guardian, and not allowing us to follow the wicked desires.

— [PHOTIUS] Virtue opposes vice, so that the fleshly will, stirred by vice, may not immediately, as if unrestrained and uncontrolled, be carried headlong toward sin. Again, vice opposes virtue, so that the practice of virtue may not be entirely effortless and unmerited, and as if joined to us by nature and necessity, and accomplished merely by thinking, without any earnestness or struggle.

He himself briefly says this: "*so that you may not do what you wish,*" neither the bad, he says, easily at all and without hindrance, nor indeed the good readily altogether and carelessly. Things therefore done would not even be good. [*end of the excerpt by Photius*] —

"*But if you are led by the Spirit.*" If, he says, you walk according to the will of the Holy Spirit, you will not go astray. But the one who does not stumble in anything does not need the law and its guidance that follows from it. And the one who does not need it is not under it, as he says elsewhere, the law does not apply to the righteous.

"*are evident.*" Therefore he seemed to say: From their own fruits you will recognize the wicked and base society.

But "*flesh*" he speaks of again, of the corrupting imagination and of the earthy and fleshly life.

"*the works of the flesh.*" It is therefore clear that by "*flesh*" he calls the fleshly mindset, that is, the soul's tendency toward worse things; and by "*spirit*" the given grace.

"*uncleanness, filthiness.*" He says unclean and shamelessness, shameful practices of prostitution.

"*enmities.*" The unjust. For there are also just enmities, those arising from faithfulness. For he says that if it were possible for you to be at peace with all people, it is clear that there are times when this is not possible.

"*jealousy.*" For one must not be jealous, but rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

"*rivalries.*" As in quarrels arising from conflict.

"*revelries.*" To hurl hecklings and to taunt the convictions of others in a state of drunkenness.

"*will not inherit the kingdom of God.*" Meanwhile all will fall from power, yet there will be diversity in their punishments.

Galatians 5:22-26 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

He said "*fruit*" and not "*work*," in order to show that it needs the help of God in order to bear fruit.

"*of the Spirit.*" Concerning the same one of the Paraclete, or of the spiritual and virtuous life.

"*joy.*" To rejoice in God, to have a conscience. For such people rejoice.

"Against such things there is no law." For he who has achieved these things does not need the law that instructs. For it is higher than that law.

"Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh." Then, for fear that they say, "And who does these things?" he says: These are they who do these things, who have crucified the flesh of Christ, that is, their own body (for the flesh of Christ is our body), and as it were have mortified it from fleshly affections. And not only the body, insofar as it was subject to passions they crucified, but also the passions themselves, insofar as they tended to be completed by them they were crucified, according to this interpretation; the rest is passing over.

Or in another way. And what do I say, he says, one by one a form of virtue? For there are some who have also crucified themselves, as regards their passions, and the passions, as regards themselves. According to this interpretation, the word does not apply to the δε. But those of Christ, that is, those who, stretching out their flesh, have crucified it. Therefore Clement in the fifth book of the Hypotyposes.

— [PHOTIUS] And there is the phrase, οἱ δὲ (But they), and instead of the phrase, οὗτοι δὲ (But these)," to have heard. These are the ones I spoke of, those who crucified the flesh of Christ, and so on. [end of the excerpt by Photius] —

"let us also walk by the Spirit." Therefore we too ought to live according to the will of the Spirit. Since we are going to crucify the flesh of ours once for all, "let us also walk by the Spirit," he says, that is, let us be satisfied with the grace given by the Holy Spirit, and not seek to be saved by the law.

"Let us not become conceited." For this is the source of all evils.

"provoking one another." Clearly into quarrels.

"*envying one another.*" For envy comes from conceit, and from envy, countless evils.

Translator notes for Galatians chapter 5.

1. "Gehennas" Γεεννῶν is the genitive plural form of the Greek noun γέεννα (Gehenna). It translates to "of hells" or "of Gehennas." Historically the Hinnom Valley was a real ravine south of Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, it was notorious for idolatrous rituals, including child sacrifice. Later it eventually became the city's refuse dump, where fires burned continuously to consume waste and the bodies of those denied proper burial. Symbolically by the New Testament era, "Gehenna" became a symbolic term for a place of final punishment, torment, and the "unquenchable fire" for the wicked after death.

2. This is not a direct quote from Scripture. Perhaps Oecumenius had this as a variant reading in the Scripture text that he was using.

3. "revelries." [κῶμοι] The word Κῶμοι is the plural of the Ancient Greek word κῶμος, which refers to revelry, carousing, or riotous feasting. In the New Testament, κῶμοι is used in a negative sense to describe excessive, unrestrained, or immoral partying.

CHAPTER 6

Galatians 6:1-2 *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any sin, you who are spiritual should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Be watching yourself, for fear that you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and therefore fulfill the law of Christ.*

Many, overcome by an ambitious striving for dominion, satisfied their desire in reproving the faults of their neighbors; which he corrects by saying: *If anyone is caught in a sin.* For this is the kind of thing, anticipated, "*you who are spiritual.*" Those who live

according to the spirit, “*restore*,” that is, correct such a one. Then, casting out self-love, he says, “*in a spirit of gentleness*.” That is to say, in gentleness, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

“*Be watching yourself*.” Then, so that the one correcting might not become arrogant, he says: Be watching yourself also, and guard yourself, for fear that you fall by the same snares.

"Bear one another's burdens." Since there is no person without sin, he urges not to be demanding toward the sins of one's neighbor, as knowing that you too have sins, and that we must behave toward one another with mutual consideration.

— [PHOTIUS] For *the law of Christ* was therefore demonstrated through his works: for he indeed took up our sins and bore our diseases. (Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 8:17) And the excess, that he also accepted the cross and death for us. [*end of the Photius excerpt*]

— [OECUMENIUS] Or that to bear one another's burdens and weaknesses is thereby the fulfilling of *the law of Christ*, insofar as it is done out of love. Love is the fulfillment of the divine law. (Rom. 13:10) [*end of the excerpt by Oecumenius*] —

Galatians 6:3-6 *For if anyone seems to himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own mind. But let each person prove his own burden, and then he will have glory only for himself, and not for another. For each will bear his own burden. Let the one being instructed share the word with his instructor in all good things.*

“*For if anyone seems to himself to be something*,” that alone is nothing of what he appears to be. Therefore he is deceiving himself in nothing.

— [PHOTIUS] "*he deceives his own mind.*" For if anyone were to approve his own work, and to examine himself exactly, he would have his boasting rather in himself and not against another; that is, he would have boasting against himself, or he would condemn himself, and not another: that is, seeing himself inferior and needy, he will accuse himself, and refrain from condemning others, since he will know that his conduct does not always observe the right way, but meanwhile even falls away from it. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"*But let each person prove.*" Let each person examine his own deeds which he himself performed in life. For by doing this he will prepare himself for better things. Yet this is not the act of one who judges, but of one who humbles himself. For it is not fitting, he says, to boast; if anything, at least do not, he says, boast as the Pharisee did against your neighbor, but against yourself. (see Luke 18:9-14)

— [THEODORET] *In another way.* But if you wish to make a display of your dignity, he says, inspect your own life; and even if you find it blameless, boast of yourself according to your own standard, provided indeed that this is what you ought to do. [*end of the excerpt by Theodoret*] —

"*For each will bear his own burden.*" For why boast over your neighbor? he says. And you, also, will bear your own burden. And then each one's work will be tested.

"*Let the one being instructed share.*" He commands those who partake of spiritual things to share with those of the flesh.

"*Let the one being instructed share the word.*" He said, "Let him who is taught share with his teacher food, goodwill, and honor." For this signifies what he says, "*In all good things.*" And he rightly said "He shares," and not "He bestows": for this sharing is of a

certain kind: he contributes spiritual things, whereas you contribute bodily things.

Galatians 6:7-10 *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows, that he will also reap; for the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good. For in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

"*God is not mocked.*" He is not deceived, nor does he give evil to the good, or good in return to the evil. For it is necessary that the unfruitful be equal to the seed. And no one, having sown beans, would reap wheat.

"*for the one who sows to his own flesh.*" What, then, does one sow in the flesh? Drunkenness, corruption, gluttony, wastefulness. Such a person, from the flesh, that is, on account of the defective flesh, will receive a punishment there. But "*to his own flesh*" means through the sins sown in the flesh.

"*But the one who sows to the Spirit.*" What does it mean to sow to the Holy Spirit? What else but almsgiving, and self-discipline, and every virtue?

"*will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*" For as the seeds of the flesh and of the spirit are different, so also is the harvest. There corruption, here eternal life.

"*Let us not become weary,*" nor grow tired, because rewards are in the future. For there will surely come a time when we will receive the good things and reap the generous things now sown

for us. Then, since he mentioned a harvest and that it requires toil and labor, he added, "*do not give up*," as if to say: The one who reaps then does not grow tired nor become exhausted, as in this present world. Therefore do not, having heard of the harvest, again prepare yourselves to labor. For even in regard to perceptible things[αἰσθητῶν¹] the seed had labor, and the sickle likewise. For ploughing undoes many things, both the ploughing itself and the heat of the season. But that reaping is not such; the sickle is free from labor. For it is free from pain and sweat. For he said, "*do not give up*."

— [PHOTIUS] Or "*do not give up*." That is, not becoming unpracticed, nor withdrawing from generous action. For the crown belongs to those who are led on to the end. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"*as we have opportunity*." For in this life, the opportunity is for work; there it is no longer.

"*let us do good to all people*." Toward Jews, toward Greeks, and especially toward the faithful.

A turning away from those who insist on circumcision, and an encouragement toward a new life by the Spirit.

Galatians 6:11-13 *See what large letters I have written to you with my own hand. Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh compel you to be circumcised, only that they might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire that you be circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh.*

The word "*large*" [πηλίκους] does not indicate size, but rather the irregularity of the letters. As if he said: And although I know how

to write these things well, nevertheless I have been forced to write the letter with my own hand, because, he says, my confession is set down in my own hand, that I do not preach circumcision as those who slanderously say.

"Those who desire to make a good showing." He says: those who wish to be approved by men, these compel you to be circumcised. By what kind of men? Either by Jews as keepers of the ancestral law, or by outsiders as though you were their disciples.

For *"in the flesh,"* that is, in men.

"be circumcised." They wish to have others circumcised, so that they not be harassed on account of the cross and the faith, and so that they may endure persecution. But if it is *"they are persecuted"* [διωκῶνται], then understand it therefore: they do everything and want to please men, only that they may not be ruled and persecuted through faith.

"but they desire that you be circumcised." He shows that vanity is the aim of all their actions. For he says that these who are circumcised and who circumcise you do not do this as if keeping and observing a law, but in order that they may have an occasion for boasting by circumcising you. For that is what he means by *"in your flesh,"* namely, that they may be teachers, he says, and have you as disciples.

Galatians 6:14-18 *But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any force, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me; for*

I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

How sad a thing it has become! But what is the *boast*? That he accepted to be crucified for us the unworthy. For this is the occasion of our boasting. May it be my boast, then, to *boast in the cross of Christ*, which seems to be foolishness and a thing of reproach to unbelievers.

"*through which the world has been crucified to me.*" He says "world" meaning the things of livelihood, the praise of men, the glory. Therefore all those things that are with me are dead. Then he says with emphasis: "And I," he says, "am dead to these," indicating by the double deadness the utter avoidance of them and their complete inactivity.

— [OECUMENIUS] "*but a new creation.*" A new creation, he says, of all things; for all who were circumcised and those uncircumcised alike, having believed, have become a new creation, having buried the old man, and we having been regenerated by the washing of baptism. [*end of the excerpt by Oecumenius*] —

"*And those who will walk by this rule.*" He says, "May those who are satisfied with this rule and this teaching regard everything as a new creation, and not subject themselves to the law."

"*and upon the Israel of God.*" Israel is a faithful people, as if devoted to God. And whoever has been unfaithful, even if he descends from Jacob, is cast out from the kinship that is toward him.

"*From now on let no one trouble me.*" He does not say this out of reluctance, God forbid. But intending that the laws he has put in place remain unalterable, so that nothing may be added to or taken away from them after him.

— [PHOTIUS] "*let no one trouble me.*" Let no one bring against me an accusation for the things I do. For even in silence I have a greater defense through my deeds. For the marks of Christ, that is, the wounds and scars for Christ's sake, themselves testify to his path and zeal on his behalf, and to the sincere and pure and unstained nature of the preaching.

"*Let no one trouble me* concerning my labors." To what extent do you afflict and trouble me, he says, being agitated do you offer? Be ashamed, if nothing else, but at least of the marks of Christ, which for your sake and because of the proclamation to you I carry about in my body. And when he says the marks of Christ, he at once reminds that he also suffered for us. And therefore in every way it was fitting to abandon the law and be established in faith. [*end of the Photius excerpt*] —

"*the marks of the Lord Jesus.*" By "marks" he means the sores, the wounds, the sufferings for the Lord and for the preaching.

"*for I bear in my body.*" As if he said: Let no one slander me among you as a hypocrite. For these very wounds and the blows suffered for the Lord bear witness that I live sincerely. For he was slandered, doing everything as if from hypocrisy, sometimes proclaiming circumcision, at other times not.

"*with your spirit.*" With a mindful spirit. He wishes to attain favor for his soul.

The end, by the favor of divine aid, of the Epistle to the Galatians. It was sent from the city of Rome.

Translator notes for Galatians chapter 6.

1. perceptible things [αἰσθητῶν]. αἰσθητῶν is the genitive plural form of the adjective αἰσθητός, which describes anything that can be experienced

through physical sensation, such as sight, sound, or touch, rather than through pure intellect.